

APPROVED

MIAA RULE CHANGE PROPOSALS FOR THE 2025-2027 HANDBOOK

In accordance with MIAA Rule 88, the following thirteen rule changes were approved by the MIAA Board of Directors during their meeting on January 8, 2025. These changes will go into effect on July 1, 2025. To access the complete rule change proposal packet, including voting details, please [click here](#).

2. Page 22

Part II, Definitions and Policies - Rule 22: Definition of a Scrimmage

By: The Hockomock League

Current Rule:

To have an interscholastic scrimmage, which will not count against the game limitation rules, the scrimmage must meet the following conditions:

22.1 A scrimmage is competition among any number of schools where no admission is charged, no game-day uniform is worn; score is kept only by segments, and the event is intended to be a practice, with instruction occurring during competition.

22.2 If any of these restrictions are violated, the meeting must be counted as a game and will count toward the total number of interscholastic contests for that sport.

22.3 An "exhibition game" must be counted in the season limitation for the sport, except for an alumni or faculty-student game.

22.4 Ineligible students are NOT allowed to participate in scrimmages/play-days/jamborees.

22.5 Scrimmages may be held at any time during the season.

Note: Play-Days must conform to the criteria of either a scrimmage or jamboree.

Proposal:

Remove the statement in rule 22.1, "no-game-day uniform is worn".

22.1 A scrimmage is competition among any number of schools where no admission is charged, ~~no game-day uniform is worn~~; score is kept only by segments, and the event is intended to be a practice, with instruction occurring during competition.

Rationale:

With the use of Arbiter by all MIAA member schools across the state and the schedule commitment deadline, games and scrimmages are clearly marked in each team's official schedule. Scrimmages are already permitted at any time during the season. There is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for wearing a game-day uniform instead of other options.

4. Page 20

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: Terri Riggs and Mary Lou Thimas- MIAA Girl's Lacrosse Committee Members

Current Rule:

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Spring Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Girls Lacrosse	20	3

Proposal:

Reduce the maximum number of girls lacrosse competitions from 20 to 18.

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Spring Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Girls Lacrosse	18	3

Rationale:

- Consistent with game limitation for boys' lacrosse
- More consistent with like sport limitations.... Field Hockey and Soccer
- Lack of numbers of qualified officials to cover the number of games.
- Girls' lacrosse is a growing sport and has become more physically demanding, by reducing the number of games it will give players an opportunity to recover from physical play.
- There are a number of players who are now competing on select teams outside of their scholastic teams and because of this additional lacrosse commitment they have a limited opportunity to physically and mentally recover.
- Weather issues in the Spring force grass field teams to delay the start of the season because fields are unplayable. Thunder and lightning issues causing game postponements or cancellations have forced teams to play 4-5 games during the last week of the regular season to get games completed before the tournament cutoff date. Playing 4-5 games in the final week also requires receiving a waiver from the MIAA and places additional physical, emotional logistical nightmare for Athletic Directors, coaches, players and assigners.
- Conflict in scheduling turf fields for the teams that utilize the field in the Spring season.
- The Western Mass. Coaches association is strongly in favor of reducing the number of girls' lacrosse games to 18.
- The governing organization in Eastern MA. (EMWLUA), which includes assigners and officials, is also strongly in favor of reducing the total number of games to 18.
- Transportation demands and issues with bus and bus drivers' availability, not to mention the monetary bus transportation expenses that are being placed on school athletic budgets. Bus issues across the board have become a huge concern for AD's, coaches, assigners and officials. It is becoming a regular occurrence for teams to arrive 30-45 minutes past the scheduled game start time. This creates a major problem for AD's, assigners and officials because the enormity of seasonal game coverage requirements often means that officials are leaving one game assignment and arriving late to another site to officiate another game.

5. Page 21

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: MIAA Wrestling Committee

Current Rule:

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Winter Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Wrestling	20	3

Proposal:

Allow schools to schedule a maximum of four (4) girls only wrestling competition dates that do not count towards their seasonal limitation of 20 competition dates per season.

Rationale:

With the increasing popularity of girls' wrestling, the rules should permit schools to send their female wrestlers to "girls-only" tournaments and meets without affecting the seasonal limitations for the entire wrestling team. Currently, if a school sends one female wrestler to a girls-only tournament during the regular season, it counts as one of the team's 20 competition dates for the year. This rule can discourage schools and coaches from participating in these events, thereby hindering the growth of girls' wrestling and limiting the opportunities available to female wrestlers.

10. Page 26

Part III, Rule 37: Interstate Competition with NFHS Affiliated Member Schools

By: William Devin, Athletic Director, Lynn Classical High School

Current Rule:

37.3 The MIAA Board of Directors criteria for considering approval of interstate contests are:

37.3.1 Participation involves no more than a one-day loss of school time.

37.3.2 No more than two consecutive days of competition are permitted.

37.3.3 The activity is sponsored by or under the ultimate control of secondary school personnel.

37.3.4 The event only involves competition with schools that are members of their state association or schools that have been approved for competition by their state association and it is a sanctioned sport of both associations.

Proposal:

Replace rule 37.3.1 with the language that, *“as long as all academic requirements are met, the loss of school time for all interstate athletic contests/trips should be up to each individual school district and have approval of the town/city Mayor, Superintendent, School Committee, Principal and parents whose children are participating in the contests/trip.”*

Rationale

It should not be up to the MIAA to determine how many days of school a student athlete can miss to participate in an approved interstate athletic contest if previously approved by the town/city Mayor, Superintendent, School Committee, Principal and parents whose children are participating in the contests/trip.

11. Pages 37-41

Part IV, Rule 49: Sportsmanship- Athlete and Coach Contest Disqualifications/Suspensions

By: Richard Pearson, MIAA Associate Director

**This proposal will also impact ice hockey rule 72.11 and soccer rule 78.2.8*

Current Rule:

None

Proposal:

Add a new rule to the Sportsmanship Rule 49;

New section 49.5 Total Team Disqualifications - Tournament Eligibility

Any team (in all sports) whose players/coaches receive collectively a total of more than four disqualifications during the regular season shall not qualify for the MIAA tournament. An appeal to enter the tournament can be made to a subcommittee of the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee. Appeal to enter the tournament must be made to the MIAA liaison to the Sportsmanship Committee.

Rationale:

Two specific sports, Ice Hockey and Soccer have a potential tournament removal if a team reaches a number of disqualifications during the regular season. Ice Hockey Rule 72.11 lists "More than 3 disqualifications", and Soccer Rule 78.2.8 lists "more than 4 red cards" (which are the same as disqualifications in other sports). This expectation for only two sports does not seem to fit with what expectations should really be for all schools in all sports. Focusing on only two sports inherently allows other sports to exceed anything more than 3 or 4 with no limits. If one inquired of expectations set forth by current school athletic departments, I think we would find that school leaders already address any of their teams with excessive disqualifications. Adding this rule would make all sport teams responsibly monitor disqualifications and uphold the highest ideals of sportsmanship for individuals and collectively for the team.

Additionally, the ice hockey rule had an appeal process, but the soccer rule did not. This proposal also establishes a clear appeal process which is appropriately placed before the Sportsmanship Committee and not individual sports.

Team DQ's/red cards collected for all sports and all teams for the 2023-24 school year show only three teams with greater than 3 DQ's and only one of those teams with greater than 4 DQ's. This data indicates this new rule for all sports would not impact any team/sport unreasonably and allow for all sports to have the same standard and to be administered in the same manner.

This proposal also includes the elimination of the ice hockey and soccer rules:

- Eliminate – Rule 72.11; Page 65
- Eliminate – Rule 78.2.8; Page 70

12. Pages 41

Part IV, Rule 49: Sportsmanship- Athlete and Coach Contest Disqualifications/Suspensions By: The Hockomock League and Paul Spear, Athletic Director, Framingham High School

Current Rule:

- 49.3.8 A student who physically assaults an official shall be expelled from the activity immediately and banned from further participation in all sports for one year from the date of the offense.
- 49.3.9 Any student in any sport who willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempts to injure an opponent shall be removed from the contest immediately and shall be ineligible in all sports for one year from the date of the incident. Such a violation must be indicated by the game official on the student contest disqualification form. ("Fighting" does not apply to this section unless warranted in the judgment of the game official.)
- 49.3.10 A student disqualification cannot be appealed, except for a one-year suspension. During an Eligibility Appeals Board (EAB) hearing of a one-year suspension, the appeal can only be in relation to the length of the penalty, not the judgement of the official. Refer to rule 89 for more information on hearings and appeals.

[MIAA Student Contest Disqualification Form](#) includes a check box for the official to mark if they believe rule 49.3.8 or 49.3.9 were violated.

Please check below **ONLY** if the disqualification was issued for the following actions:

- Was the violation for fighting, punching or kicking an opposing player, or spitting at someone?
(Rule 49.3.6 – 2 Game Suspension)
- Was the violation for physically assaulting an official?
(Rule 49.3.8 – One-Year Suspension)
- Was the violation for willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempting to injure an opponent?
(Rule 49.3.9 – One-Year Suspension)

Proposal:

Change the wording on the current MIAA Student Contest Disqualification form to read as follows:

- Was the violation for physically assaulting an official?
(Rule 49.3.8 - **Recommended** One Year Suspension)
- Was the violation for willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempting to injure an opponent? (Rule 49.3.9 - **Recommended** One Year Suspension).

If the official ‘recommends’ a One-Year Suspension, it will automatically trigger an Eligibility Appeal Board hearing to review the incident and make a final decision on suspension length.

Rationale:

Changing the wording on the form to “Recommended” One Year Suspension will now automatically trigger an EAB hearing. The EAB members convened for the hearing will have the opportunity to review all facts pertaining to the incident and will make a final decision. Schools will have the Option to “Opt Out” of the hearing in support of the Recommended one-year suspension.

It is beyond reasonable expectation to ask officials to make a one-year suspension, a judgment call, during, or at the conclusion of an athletic competition. The new wording on the Student Disqualification Form allows officials to make the recommendation to suspend. The filed form triggers the EAB review. This then provides opportunity for a measured response, free of the emotion of the game-day situation and assess appropriate consequences for the violation.

----- START OF SPORT SPECIFIC ONLY RULES -----

18. Page 65

Part V, Rule 65: Baseball

By: Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association (MBCA)

Current Rule:

65.5 MIAA pitch count breakpoints and required rest will be as follows:

Varsity		Sub Varsity	
1-25 pitches	0 days rest	1-25 pitches	0 days rest
26-40 pitches	1 days rest	26 -40 pitches	1 days rest
41-55 pitches	2 days rest	41-55 pitches	2 days rest
56-70 pitches	3 days rest	56-70 pitches	3 days rest
71-115 pitches	4 days rest	71-95 pitches	4 days rest

*These rules apply to both regular and post season play.

*If a pitcher has thrown 71-90 pitches on the day he last pitched, on his fourth day of rest, he would be eligible to throw a maximum of 25 pitches.

Proposal:

65.5 MIAA pitch count breakpoints and required rest will be as follows:

Varsity		Sub Varsity	
1-24 pitches	0 days rest	1-24 pitches	0 days rest
25-42 pitches	1 days rest	25-42 pitches	1 days rest
43-60 pitches	2 days rest	43-60 pitches	2 days rest
61-78 pitches	3 days rest	61-78 pitches	3 days rest
79-115 pitches	4 days rest	79-95 pitches	4 days rest

*If a pitcher has thrown 79-95 pitches on the day he last pitched, on his fourth day of rest, he would be eligible to throw a maximum of 25 pitches.

Rationale:

Without increasing the total number of pitches allowed in a game, this proposal provides a little more flexibility for programs to have pitchers return sooner with mid-tier pitch counts. This proposal was supported unanimously by the MIAA Baseball Committee and proposed by the Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association (MBCA).

19. Pages 58 and 69

Part V, Rule 66: Basketball and Rule 78: Soccer

By: Amanda Alpert, Athletic Director, Chelsea High School

Current Rule:

Basketball: 66.9 The team jersey torso color shall be light for the home team and a contrasting dark color for the visiting team.

Soccer: 78.1.6 The home team shall wear dark jerseys and sock, and the visiting team shall wear white or light jerseys and socks.

Proposal:

Teams may wear a uniform of their school's colors so long as there is a distinct difference between the opposing teams uniform color. In the event that the opposing team has the same uniform colors, the home team chooses their uniform color, and the opposing team must wear their contrasting color.

Rationale:

Research has found that girls have lower levels of confidence as teenagers, they drop out of sport particularly between the ages of 12 and 14, and do not want to participate in physical activity based on their body image. Many girls feel self-conscious about their period and the color white exacerbating this feeling and particularly when they are concerned about leaking.

21. Page 63

Part V, Rule 71: Gymnastics

By: MIAA Gymnastics Committee

Current Rule:

71.1.8 Exhibition performances are allowed with the following conditions:

- Each team is allowed to have up to two Junior Varsity routines per event.
- Consideration should be made for the number of JV routines when there are more than two teams and/or the meet starts after 7:00 PM.
- These routines must follow all the following rules:
 - Be designated at the start of the event.
 - Once the event starts no changes can be made to the designation of the gymnast.
 - The routines must be the first ones on the event.
 - The judge must be notified at the start of the event that there is a JV competitor or two going first.
 - Their scores cannot be used for the team score at that meet.
 - Their scores cannot be used as qualifying scores for varsity qualifications (MIAA Sectional Meet)

Proposal:

71.1.8 ~~Exhibition~~ **JV** performances are allowed **at a varsity meet** with the following conditions:

- Each team is allowed to have up to two Junior Varsity routines per event.
- ~~Consideration should be made for the number of JV routines when there are more than two teams and/or the meet starts after 7:00 PM.~~ **If a meet starts after 8:00 PM, no JV routines will be accepted.**
- These routines must follow all the following rules:
 - Be designated at the start of the event.
 - Once the event starts no changes can be made to the designation of the gymnast.
 - The routines must be the first ones on the event.
 - The judge must be notified at the start of the event that there is a JV competitor or two going first.
 - Their scores cannot be used for the team score at that meet.
 - Their scores cannot be used as qualifying scores for varsity qualifications (MIAA Sectional Meet)

Rationale:

Over the years, gymnastics meets have been trending to later start times, leading to student athletes and officials arriving home very late. In the interest of safety of junior operators and officials, the MIAA Gymnastics Committee unanimously supported this minor change to not allow JV routines if a meet begins after 8pm.

22. Page 67

Part V, Rule 74: Lacrosse

By: MIAA Lacrosse Committee

Current Rule:

74.6 In Boys lacrosse if a team is leading by 12 goals at the end of the third quarter - the fourth quarter will have running time. There will be no resumption of stop time once this rule is started.

Proposal:

Remove rule from the MIAA Handbook

Rationale:

Remove rule from the MIAA Handbook which will then allow use of NFHS Rule 3 Section 1 Art. 2 for clarity and consistency. Rule 74.6 is not as clear or detailed as the current NFHS running time boys' lacrosse rule. Officials have been confused about proper application with the MIAA rule vs. NFHS rule.

NFHS Rule 3 Section 1 Art. 2:

ART. 2 . . . After the first half, any time the score differential reaches 12 goals or more, starting with the whistle resuming play, the clock will only be stopped for a team time-out, official's time-out or an injury time-out. All penalties that occur during a score differential situation will be running time. In this situation, running penalty time begins with the next whistle resuming play.

23. Page 73

Part V, Rule 81: Tennis

By: Richard Pearson, MIAA Associate Director and Tennis Committee Liaison

Current Rule:

81.1.1 All matches are to be decided on the basis of best two out of three sets with a 7-point tiebreaker when a set reaches 6-6 in games. (Local conditions may cause an adjustment of this rule by prior mutual consent).

Proposal:

Strikethrough one sentence and replace with new language

81.1.1 All matches are to be decided on the basis of best two out of three sets with a 7-point tiebreaker when a set reaches 6-6 in games. ~~(Local conditions may cause an adjustment of this rule by prior mutual consent).~~

Other Match/Set Resolutions:

- a) If the team match has been decided (i.e. - one of the teams has already won three of the five team matches) and an individual match is still in progress, in the event of split sets, there will be a three (3) minute break followed by a first-to-ten-by-two match tiebreaker. Players are not allowed to leave the court prior to the tiebreaker.
- b) If available daylight or other local conditions necessitate alternative match scoring, such as the need to play a double header, AND with prior mutual consent of both teams, a team tennis match could us Pro Set (8-Game) scoring for all matches. Pro Set scoring cannot be used for tournament play. Pro Set scoring can be found in the USTA "Friend at Court" Part 3 Reg. I.E.4.

Rationale:

Rule 81.1.1 is used frequently, during the regular season, when unique circumstances arise. The first portion of this addition includes language from the Tennis Format that has been used extensively in the regular season ("one of the teams has already won . . . first-to-ten-by-two . . .") but never listed in the MIAA Handbook as a rule option for match scoring. This clearly inserts this approach as an option for the regular season. The additional submission of Pro Set is also a common use in the regular season. It is especially necessary given possible weather challenges and late season makeup matches. Given a new power ranked formula for Team Tennis, it is proposed here in this rule change to clarify the only possibilities for match structure. The previous "local conditions" is too vague even though most of the time, almost all of the time, only these two structures were used but not detailed in the rule. The Pro Set instructions are clearly documented in the USTA rules manual, Friend at Court.

24. Page 78

Part V, Rule 84: Wrestling

By: MIAA Wrestling Committee

Current Rule:

84.2.4 A double dual, triangular, quadrangular or tournament meet must be scheduled on a day preceding a non-school day, i.e., Friday, Saturday, the day before a vacation or holiday, or during school vacation periods.

Proposal:

Remove 'double dual, triangular and quadrangular' from rule 84.2.4.

The updated rule would read, *"A tournament meet must be scheduled on a day preceding a non-school day, i.e., Friday, Saturday, the day before a vacation or holiday, or during school vacation periods."*

Rationale:

Leave it in the hands of the school Athletic Director to determine if they want to schedule a double dual, tri-meet or quad on a school night. This rule negatively impacts the smaller schools/teams that could easily host a tri-meet that would take less time than a regular dual meet due to forfeited weight classes/smaller team sizes.

25. Page 79

Part V, Rule 84: Wrestling

By: Lindsey von Holtz, Director of Athletics, Mount Greylock Regional High School

Current Rule:

84.4.3 An MIAA Minimum Weight Control Certificate will be issued to each wrestler at the beginning of the season. This Certificate will contain a statement showing the wrestler's certified minimum weight class. This Certificate must be filled out in ink and signed in ink by the wrestler, the wrestler's parent or guardian, the wrestler's coach, and a duly registered Licensed Physician, Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner or Licensed Athletic Trainer. It must be on file in the athletic director's office, electronically submitted in MIAA Members Only & on FLO Arena prior to the wrestler's first interscholastic competition of that season.

Proposal:

Add: "Certified School Nurse" to allowable certification signatures in Rule 84.4.3

An MIAA Minimum Weight Control Certificate will be issued to each wrestler at the beginning of the season. This Certificate will contain a statement showing the wrestler's certified minimum weight class. This Certificate must be filled out in ink and signed in ink by the wrestler, the wrestler's parent or guardian, the wrestler's coach, and a duly registered Licensed Physician, Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, **Certified School Nurse** or Licensed Athletic Trainer.

Rationale:

The rationale for the medical signature on these forms is to ensure students are safe and ensure students are not being encouraged to lose too much weight. Small schools without trainers are often forced to involve local pediatricians who may not know the student or any medical or disordered eating condition that the student may have. Decisions are made purely on mathematical calculations and without necessary information about a student. School nurses in Massachusetts are required to be a registered nurse and to hold a professional license. In addition, they know our students well and can easily determine a safe weight class for a student to wrestle. They can use the mathematical calculation but can also use their own judgement based on knowledge of the student.